



Page 2:

- Satisfied Homebuyers
- CDBG, HOME, ADDI Funding Cuts

Page 3:

- St. Monica's Open House
- Star Art Artist Doubles as UDD Staff
- Near South Focus Area II

Page 4:

- Neighborhood Park Improvements '06
- 48th & O Street Update

Process: Concept, Design, Construction

Process, process -- that really says so much about what we at Urban Development Department do. We start with concepts, we design programs and projects, and finally we implement programs (for housing rehabilitation, for example) and construct projects. This is a closer look at that process.

From Concept...

Projects (and programs, too) usually develop from concepts proposed in plans: Strategic, Focus Area, or Redevelopment Area Plans. Often not much progress can be made on a concept until someone decides to invest in it. That someone can be an individual developer, a neighborhood association, or a non-profit agency. For Urban Development, concepts that become projects are almost always built on partnerships with one or more of those interested parties.

For example, the basic concept of making **improvements on South Street** first surfaced in the late 1980's with no immediate result. After the 2000 U.S. Census, the demographics of the area changed, making it possible to consider using CDBG funds. This time, the Near South Neighborhood Association and the South Street business owners were also interested and the redevelopment process finally began. Keeping in mind that blight studies, redevelopment plans and local governmental reviews are not rash, impulsive, or usually speedy, "zoom" ahead to 2005.

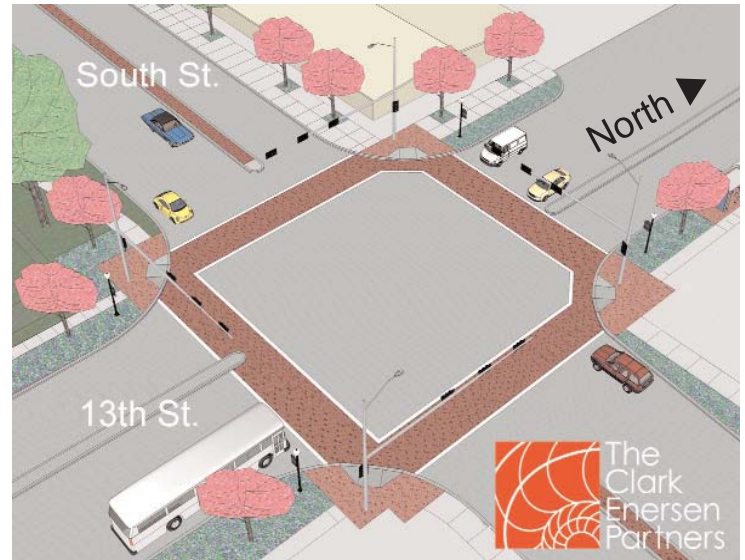
In July, 2005 discussions with the Public Works Department, Urban Development learned that

Public Works was planning to improve South Street (the road itself) in the same area. The time was right! The two departments decided to work together to make all improvements at once, minimizing costs and disruption to motorists and area businesses.

To Design...

When the City contracted with the Clark Enersen Partners to gather public input and provide the South Street design work, "concept" moved toward "design." When completed in February, 2007, the design will include road resurfacing and, where needed, curb, gutter, and sidewalk replacement by Public Works. Urban Development will use Tax Increment Finance (TIF) funds for street enhancements. Depending on the design, that could include trees and plantings, lighting, signage and other amenities to establish an identifiable character for South Street between 9th & 18th Streets.

A redevelopment project in the **University Place Commercial Area** is also in the design stage. Urban Development is nearing completion on a redevelopment agreement with Kinport, Inc. for improvements between 48th and 49th Streets along Huntington Avenue. The project incorporates three lots, including the former site of the NE Printers Building and the old Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph warehouse at 49th & Huntington. The developer's design includes a Lincoln Police Department station, a mixed-use commercial/residential building, and additional parking. Pending City Council approval, construction could begin this summer.



Erickson Sullivan Architects has been hired to design Phase II of improvements for the **South 17th Street Commercial Area**. This phase will extend the 1998 streetscape improvements on the west side of 17th Street and construct new improvements on the east side, from Prospect to Washington Streets. The new streetscape amenities will mimic existing improvements, including aesthetic lighting, signage, benches, planters, and sidewalk improvements. The project will compliment recent improvements to the 17th and Washington Russ's Market, and is expected to be complete in 2007.

Finally, Construction...

Several projects have completed the design phase and are now under construction, including:

Heartland Optical: Mild winter weather has favored construction of Heartland Optical's new building at 27th and Y Streets. They anticipate opening on June 1st. With the new facility, they will now be able to provide cus-

tomers with expanded services including eye exams, vision insurance and contact lenses. They will also be able to provide vision care for patients from the People's Health Center across 27th Street.

Government Square: Dirt is flying at what will soon be known as Government Square Park on the northwest corner of 10th and O Streets. Urban Development, in partnership with Parks and Recreation, has contracted with Nemaha Landscape Construction, Inc. to transform this green space into an urban pocket park that will contain a signature fountain, distinctive fencing, site furnishings and landscaping. With construction-friendly winter (so far), the improvements should be in place for a Spring 2006 dedication.

University Designed Housing: Construction continues at 949 N. 30th Street on a first-time collaborative project between

Continued on page 2...

Funding Cuts: The Lincoln Impact

The City of Lincoln has been informed that CDBG, HOME, and ADDI funds will be cut in the next fiscal year. Urban Development will receive over \$300,000 less, starting September 1, 2006.

This is a painful cut for the department. Although the City budget process for next year is just beginning and no decisions have yet been made, the level of service that Urban Development is able to provide to low- and moderate-income people and neighborhoods will undoubtedly be reduced.

Cuts in these funds began last year, with approximately a 5% reduction in CDBG and HOME funds. This year, CDBG alone was cut by an additional 11%. These are real cuts, not just the reduction of an anticipated increase.

People who are interested in seeing funding restored for these essential programs should contact their Congressional Representatives to speak out about their concerns.



THE URBAN PAGE

Volume 9, Issue 4 Winter, 2006
808 P Street, # 400, Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 441-7606 TDD (402) 441-7615
www.lincoln.ne.gov, keyword: urban

City of Lincoln: Coleen J. Seng - Mayor

Administration Division: Marc Wullschleger - Director,
Dallas McGee - Assistant Director, Ron Cane, Jeff Cole,
Kristi Nydahl, Pat Posey Ribeiro

Workforce Investment Program Division: Dan Cain -
Manager, Barb Anderson, Andrea Chandler, LeAnn Fry,
Sherry Hageman, Bethany Olson

Workforce Investment Administrative Division: Jan
Norlander-Jensen - Administrator

Community Development Division: Wynn Hjermstad -
Manager, Maggie Aldrich, Ernesto Castillo, Jr., Opal
Doerr, Troy Gagner, Diana Michael, Kathy Northrop,
Hallie Salem, Bradd Schmeichel

Housing Rehabilitation & Real Estate Division: Steve
Werthmann - Manager, Jennie Austin, Michelle Backe-
meyer, Dave Ensign, Olga Kanne, Sean McClatchey,
Erin McGovern, Sandy Ruether, Mary Stanley, Clint
Thomas

Newsletter Staff: Editor - Opal Doerr, Steering Commit-
tee - Dan Cain, Troy Gagner, Wynn Hjermstad, Dallas
McGee, Jan Norlander-Jensen, Steve Werthmann,
Marc Wullschleger

Reprint Policy: Articles may be reprinted as long as
The Urban Page is cited as the source and the article is
reprinted in its entirety with no changes. Please contact
the editor for information about reprinting artwork or
photos. If you aren't currently on the mailing list and
would like to be, please contact the editor.

AA/EEO

Printed on paper with
at least 10%
recycled content.



Homebuyers Report Success

For the second year in a row, graduates of the NeighborWorks®Lincoln homebuyer education classes are happy with their neighborhood and the home they purchased.

The second annual homebuyer education satisfaction survey for NeighborWorks®Lincoln was conducted by Schmeeckle Research, an independent research company. The response rate was good -- 114 homebuyer graduates (44%) responded. Of the respondents, 63% said they had purchased a home and, of those, 76% had purchased their home through the NeighborWorks®Lincoln First Home Program. All (100%) of the respondents who had purchased a home said they were happy with their neighborhoods and their house.

The First Home Program provides a 0% deferred second mortgage to assist with closing costs, down payment assistance and repairs to the home for income-eligible graduates. Of the respondents, 49% had repairs or rehabilitation work done on their home and 88% were happy with the rehabilitation or repair work completed.

When asked about the classes, 98% agreed or strongly agreed that the training provided information that helped them understand the process of buying a home and 91% agreed or strongly agreed that they learned more than they expected. Ninety-nine percent (99%) responded that they would strongly recommend the homebuyer education class

to first time homebuyers. There was strong agreement that the instructors of the class were very knowledgeable (94%).

Each year, NeighborWorks®Lincoln provides first time homebuyer education for as many as 400 individuals. In 2005, more than 89 families purchased homes after completing the classes. These homebuyer purchases represent more than \$10 million in homeowner investment in Lincoln and over \$400,000 in construction and repair work provided by private contractors.

Homeownership builds community and provides stability to neighborhoods and families. One excited first time homebuyer wrote, "The program helped us provide a home for our boys that we could be proud of. It helped strengthen our family unit and gave our children a safer place to play."

The City of Lincoln is a partner with NeighborWorks®Lincoln in providing the homebuyer education classes, loan counseling and housing rehabilitation and repair, as well as providing significant resources for second mortgages.

Additional funding support for second mortgages is provided by a grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The annual survey is funded by a 5-year grant from the Woods Charitable Fund to NeighborWorks®Lincoln, and is an integral part of assessing and improving the effectiveness of the First Home Program.

Continued from page 1:

the UNL College of Architecture and NeighborWorks®Lincoln. Architecture students designed the home and, under supervision, also helped frame it.

The three bedroom, one bath home features passive solar design, with an interior block wall that absorbs heat during the day. It has high energy windows and a 92% efficiency furnace. Plus, the design meets American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

According to Ken Inness, construction project manager, the home is now ready for interior trim, doors, cabinets and floor coverings. The house should be completed late this Spring.

Cornhusker Place: The mission of Cornhusker Place is to offer a continuum of substance abuse services for individuals in need of detoxification and treatment. James Baird, the Executive Director, saw the need

for extended services beyond basic treatment to aid the client in their transition back into the community. The result was a partnership with Urban Development to create nine single-room occupancy units, bathroom facilities, with program and common area on the third floor of Cornhusker Place's building at 721 K Street.

The new supportive housing units will help provide a sliding scale of structured care for individuals as they reintegrate into the community, strengthen their sobriety and better manage life's stresses. The first residents will move in by March 2006. They will be encouraged to bring their own furniture and belongings to personalize the space.

You may have noticed that plans, concepts, and designs are not very visible to the wider community. Construction is the "star" that gets the public attention. However, without those early stages, construction might never begin!

WELL-TIMED WORDS

St. Monica's Open House

On Friday, February 17th, from 3 to 5 p.m., St. Monica's is holding an open house at **120 Wedgewood Drive**. This new facility will allow St. Monica's to provide treatment for many more women and adolescent girls who are striving to overcome substance abuse and mental health obstacles.

Although they are still raising funds for final facility improvements, St. Monica's has moved administration, program staff, daily treatment programming, and a 20-bed residential treatment facility into the Wedgewood building. The move allows them to increase their services at their other Lincoln locations.

New Advisory Members

The **Greater Lincoln Workforce Investment Board** has new members:

Dwight Brown, Jr.The Hub
Connie DalyNebraska Commission for the
Blind & Visually Impaired
Bob FabianoThe Cornhusker Marriott Hotel
Julie PankoLINWELD, Inc.
Betty SemmNAF Multicultural Human
Development Corporation

The **Community Development Task Force** also has new members:

Scott BairdLMI Neighborhood
Dan MarvinCity Council
Jesse PayneAt Large, Malone Center
Modesta PutlaAt Large, Asian Center
Shawn RybaLMI Neighborhoods

Thanks for volunteering and welcome aboard!

A Star at UDD

Jennie Kohl Austin, a UDD Right of Way Specialist, is leading a double life – and we're proud of it! Jennie is an artist whose entry in the **Star City Art Project 2006** is on display at the Haymarket Theatre until April 26th. Entitled "String Theory: The Strength of Our Woven Community," her artwork is best viewed by attending a performance at the theater.

As overall sponsor of the Star Art Project, the **YWCA of Lincoln** asked artists to submit proposals for artwork that reflected a philosophy of hope and inspiration, using the concept of a star. About 170 artists submitted ideas. After a juried selection, 69 winning proposals found sponsors to help with construction and logistics costs.

Goldenrod Printing sponsored Jennie's piece -- a fiber art wall hanging consisting

Developer Fernando Pages used a combination of funding through the Housing Development Loan Program and Façade Improvement Program to renovate this historic property at 1941 K Street. The former neighborhood grocery store is now an office for his company, Brighton Construction. The attached five bedroom, one bath house was remodeled into a three bedroom, two bath rental property.



of pieced and quilted stars connected by textured fibers. It's a colorful, modern twist on Nebraska's quilting tradition.

How can you participate in the Star City Art Project? First, view the artwork! To find out where they all are, visit the YWCA's Web site: www.ywcalincoln.org/START2006.html.

Next, enter the **Star Search Lincoln** contest! Until late April, Star Art pieces will be on display all over Lincoln. Submit a photo or drawing of the stars and you'll be entered in a contest for prizes.

Finally, buy a piece of artwork! On April 28th, all of the Star Art will be sold at public auction at Pershing Auditorium to benefit the YWCA of Lincoln. Show your appreciation for the artists and their art by bidding -- and support a good cause, too!

Near South Focus Area II

In September, UDD staff, the Near South Neighborhood Association members, and a steering committee of City Departments (called a FACTeam) began the process of updating the **Near South Capitol Mall Focus Area Plan**. This will be the second plan created for this Focus Area, bounded by A, G, 13th, and 18th Streets.

Projects that were completed since the first plan include: 15th Street South Capitol Mall improvements, construction of the F Street Rec Center, street and sidewalk repair, and individual housing rehabilitation projects.

Although there have been some improvements, problems remain. The area has an

extremely low homeownership rate. Below-average housing conditions and high vacancy rates help keep rents low and low-income housing concentrated within the area. Property maintenance issues, crime, and low confidence are top concerns.

Nevertheless, the area has a sound base for redevelopment: historic and architecturally significant housing, solid public infrastructure, and a prime location near Downtown, the Capitol Building, and the UNL campus.

Two public meetings have been held to update the plan. In October, strengths and concerns were identified and a vision for the area was developed. In January, specific strategies were examined and identified.

When complete, the Focus Area Plan will define action strategies to be undertaken by specific City departments with the help of the neighborhood over the next five years. The ultimate goal is to set the area on a path for long-term revitalization.

Employer Open House

The One Stop Career Center is hosting the second **Open House for Businesses**, on April 27, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Representatives from agencies involved with the One Stop Career Center will be available to discuss services available for businesses. Last year's Open House was attended by over 100 businesses. Based on feedback from those businesses, it was decided to make the Open House an annual event.

PARTNERING FOR PARKS

In 2006, Urban Development will be providing Community Development Block Grant funding to the Parks & Recreation Department for two projects. Funds will be used for improvements at Standing Bear Park and Peter Pan Park.

Standing Bear Park - A small piece of property along the eastern boundary of Standing Bear Park, at 2400 Park Boulevard, was acquired several years ago to create a connection between the park and the neighborhood residents that live east of the park. CDBG funds will be used to construct a concrete pathway that will join the park with neighboring residential sidewalks, thereby creating an ADA accessible route to and from the park. This pathway will cross over an exist-

ing drainage channel, so a culvert or small bridge will need to be installed as part of this project.

Peter Pan Skate Park - Peter Pan Park, at N. 32nd and W Streets, is home to Lincoln's first public skatepark. This facility consists of modular pieces made of various construction materials that are exposed to the elements. The skatepark equipment is among the most heavily used features in the City-wide park system. As a result, many of the existing skatepark pieces are needing a high level of repair or replacement in order to continue providing safe and desirable use. CDBG funding will be used to repair multiple components and to replace those where repair is no longer feasible.

QUARTERLY QUOTE

"The purchase and renovation of the Wedgewood building allows many more low income women and their families to receive needed services. St. Monica's can now serve over 83% more clients through the expansion of three programs."

--Mary Barry-Magsamen,
St. Monica's Executive Director

48TH & O STREET UPDATE

If you've driven by 48th and O lately, you've seen that things are beginning to happen! The City was able to purchase the property on the south side of O Street from a willing seller on January 9, 2006, and implementation of the redevelopment project has begun.

Environmental testing has been completed, asbestos has been removed from the buildings, and demolition of the existing buildings and concrete has begun. Once the site is cleared, construction of the redevelopment

project will begin. New construction will include a Walgreens on the corner of 48th & O, a West Gate Bank branch office on the corner of 50th & O, with a Runza/Braeda Fresh Express Café between the two. Construction is anticipated to begin sometime in the spring or summer.

Along O Street, preliminary work is taking place for the related, but separate, O Street widening project. Houses on the east side of S. 48th Street have been demolished as part of the widening. O Street will close com-

pletely on March 1, with completion planned for November, 2006.

Negotiations continue with developers on the north side of O Street and are proceeding well. It is a challenging site with a number of obstacles to redevelopment, including a large drainage ditch, frequent flooding with heavy rains, and considerable changes in grade. It is anticipated that an agreement will be reached soon and presented for public hearing before the City Council within the next few months.